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A. M. D. G.

THE ANGEL OF CONSOLATION.

BY CANON SCHMID.

Continued from page 471.

CHAPTER VIII.

Madame Marcet anticipated affording Virginia great satisfaction, by informing her of the conversion of Roger, and accordingly made haste home. How little did she think of the sad scene which followed.

For some months, as we have already mentioned, a secret disease had been preying upon the young Virginia. Notwithstanding the advice and attention of her physicians, she felt her malady gaining upon her every day; and she foresaw but too clearly how vain would be found the bright visions of her mother, who, in the ardour of a parent's affection, deceived herself as to the state of her daughter.

Madame Marcet flattered herself that the sad emotions excited by the loss of a father and brothers were the only cause of the sufferings of her child. She had hoped that the country air, walking, and diversion, might gradually wear away her tendency to sadness; she cherished the fond hope—so dear to the heart of every mother—of shortly seeing her patient perfectly restored. Virginia, however, was persuaded of the contrary. An internal fever was consuming her by slow degrees, and she found her strength decreasing every day. She had walked more to-day than was her wont, and the fervour occasioned by explaining all her plans to Rosalia had overcome her. She could no longer stand, but, seated near old Marian, she anxiously awaited the return of her mother.

The moment M. Marcet entered, Virginia made an effort to rise, and advance a few steps towards her. The unfortunate mother grew pale at the sight, and throwing her arms round the neck of her dear one, she remained as fixed and motionless; nor was it till after a few moments, that she recovered strength to tender her embraces, or firmness to moderate her grief.

"I disturb you, my good mother," said Virginia in her own angelic tones; "do not afflict yourself; it is through my own fault that I am so weak. I have fatigued myself a little by walking too long before the house."

M. Marcet gazed upon her child with a sad and pensive air; then withdrew her eyes from her, but in an instant she cast them back again, yet mark, how bathed in tears! Virginia perceived them, and struggled to conceal her own; though her soul was overwhelmed with pain and suffering, she seemed to have no concern save that of consoling her parent.

M. Marcet would not now leave the side of her who engaged her tenderest affections. She sent for the most celebrated physicians from the neighbouring towns, but all agreed in confirming what had been told her before, that the malady was not settled. They recommended residing in the country, and prescribed a certain regimen. Virginia submitted to all with the greatest willingness; she even had her moments of gaiety and joy—yes, she conversed in a manner so ingenious, yet so charming, that it inspired hope and joy in the heart of her mother.

During all this time, her greatest affliction was being so far distant from a church; and, consequently, being deprived of the happiness of approaching the Sacraments, and of receiving the advice of her pastor, as frequently as she could have wished. During the course of the day, she would often contrive to escape to a private room to pray; and her mother sometimes surprised her at the foot of the crucifix, her eyes bathed in tears.

Deceiving herself with the idea that her daughter's illness arose from some desire—she knew not what—M. Marcet took advantage of one of these occasions to conjure her to lay before her the feelings of her heart.

"My child," said she, "what is it that you conceal from me?" This question surprised her; a flush spread over her cheeks, and covering her face with her hands, she ejaculated in tears, "Mother! mother!"

"Do you suffer much, Virginia?"

"It is here," she replied, pointing to her heart, "it is here that my greatest pain lies; I am afflicted to see you suffer."

"I, my child? I have no suffering but on your account. If your health were re-established, I should be but too happy. Why do you trouble yourself? What is there that you wish for? Why not ask for it? What can I desire here, but to be happy with you?"

"And if Heaven destine me for another happiness?"

"Another happiness, my dear Virginia! What are your views? You have, then, secrets, which you will not disclose to me."

"Secrets, my dear mother! Ah, now you do afflict me!" and saying these words, she tenderly kissed her parent's hand. "No, no, nothing in the world shall ever cool my affection in your regard, or persuade me to hide the feelings of my heart. But if God wishes me to be entirely His, must I not submit and obey?"

"Explain yonrself, my child: do you imagine that I can oppose your will? Whatever be your intentions, conceal them no longer."

"No, mother; but God may have his own views, although we know them not. If he calls me to himself—yes, dear mother, my sufferings increase, and all remedy is in vain."

"Ah! my Virginia, if that should happen, surely, I should die of grief."

"Nay, live, mother, to do good. Heaven will preserve you to provide for so many unfortunate persons, who, in truth, need your succour. But I, of what service can I be?"

"To render me happy, dear Virginia; I may not live without you."

"My tender parent, you love me too much; alas! soon, perhaps".....

"Soon, my child!"

"Mother, we deceive ourselves to no purpose. Gracious Heaven, grant us both firmness to submit to your holy will."

"But, Virginia, what do you mean? What would you? I am resigned to whatever shall please Heaven."

"If you knew, mother, how—ah, how much I suffer! Let us disabuse ourselves at once: this state cannot last long."

Stricken with these last words, as with a thunderbolt, M. Marcet remained for some time, as it were, perfectly lifeless. At length she exclaimed, in accents that were interrupted by her weeping, "My daughter suffers and dies! Lord, Lord! what dost thou require of me?" Then, a little calmer, she continued, "Ah, we all wish only what thou willest. Oh, my daughter, my Virginia, let us not be confounded. Perhaps the Lord wishes only to put our faith to a trial."

A few days passed by, and the health of the patient was a little improved. Her medical advisers recommended, most especially, exercise and diversion, and Miss Marcet, all weak and suffering as she was, seemed to submit to their orders with cheerfulness. She frequently walked round the garden, leaning upon her anxious mother's arm. She even went out of the grounds; and, day by day, she advanced a little farther. Her parent's heart beat with joy to see her child's progress; she counted (so to speak) her very steps; conducted her, to-day, to this tree—to-morrow, to the next; and she fondly cherished in her breast the hope, so pleasing, that she had not yet lost her only one.

Rosalia, too, was assiduous in her attentions to Virginia. This young peasant was blessed with an excellent heart, and had conceived a most lively and sincere attachment to Miss Marcet. She sought every means of enlivening and diverting her. She read to her, and conversed on what was passing in the village. Virginia smiled on her attentions, and appeared to take an interest in her narratives.

CHAPTER IX.

All was not yet over; the flame had disappeared, but there remained the burning embers, which needed but a breath to reillume them. Virginia one evening walked over with M. Marcet and Rosalia to the residence of Mathurin. On her return, she discovered that the exertion had been too great, and a sudden faintness came over her. Her two attendants were alarmed. They got her home as quickly as possible, and immediately she laid herself down upon her couch. She had placed her head upon her pillow—will she ever raise it again?

Like a tender flower, which, ere yet it is full-blown, withers and sheds upon the earth its faded beauty, this young virgin must pass away, and leave but the name of her worth behind her.

How sorrowful to the heart of a parent are the terrible moments of a cruel separation! Virginia, the sole remaining scion of a late flourishing family, is quickly following her departed friends to the grave. In vain does M. Marcet seek to cherish a feeble hope. The state of her daughter, the silence of the physicians, the grief of all those who surround her, sufficiently make known how great her illusion.

Her heart is broken, but she is resigned. She is ever by the side of her cherished one; she tenders the most watchful attention; she is everywhere, in in her eagerness to anticipate every least desire. Sleep has fled far, far from her—her eyes do not even vouchsafe a tear, so deeply fixed is her affliction. She prays; and is not her most frequent prayer a contemplation of the dolorous Mother by the side of her dying Saviour?

Virginia was a model of resignation. She had scarcely tasted of life, yet its only attraction was a tender mother. She prayed almost continually, and ardently did she sigh for the visit of her pastor, to whom she wished to make a last and a general confession. He arrived at length, and the priest of Mareuil hastened to purify the conscience of this innocent virgin from the slight stains which her human frailty might have contracted. It was a touching spectacle to see the old man of eighty years, sweetening for this young child of seventeen, the ordinary bitterness of a last journey. "Let us bless the Lord," said the venerable pastor, "let us bless Him alike in sickness and in health—in prosperity and in affliction—in life and in death. Let us unite ourselves to Jesus, and the bitterest chalice will appear full of sweetness. Let us adore his merciful intentions, although we cannot fathom them. Let us ever be at the foot of the cross, embracing his sacred wounds, and entering into his adorable heart. Thus shall we find unspeakable consolations for every evil."

The priest saw immediately that Virginia's state

was hopeless; but he had great experience in sicknesses, and he conjectured that she might yet last out many days. He asked her how soon she wished to receive the last Sacraments. "As soon," she answered, "as may be possible."

"Perhaps," he continued, "I might return tomorrow; I trust I shall have strength enough to make the journey."

"How happy should I be, my dear Sir, could you come as soon as possible—as soon as possible."

The curate engaged to revisit her the next day.

Virginia passed the rest of the day in the sweetest peace of mind. Her heart was concerned in nought but the visit of her God, and she prepared to receive him with the most tender and ardent affection. She asked Rosalia (who never left her bedside,) to read some passages from St. Francis of Sales, on Communion. She experienced great gratification in listening to them; and oft-times she would add her own reflections, which marked how great was her resignation and love of God.

Early the next morning, Mathurin, with his two sons, Francis and Philip, went to Mareuil, to accompany the most holy Sacrament to Beauval. The curate with difficulty made the journey, and at length, towards nine o'clock, the company reached the village. All the inhabitants (informed of Virginia's sickness) were standing at their doors, discoursing upon the misfortune—for there was no one so unfeeling or ungrateful as not to grieve at the loss of so young and so good a lady. Every one fell upon their knees as they saw passing the Saviour of men, and the God of all consolation.

Jacqueline (Rosalia's mother) with the rest of the family, had come to the entrance into the village, and walked behind Mathurin. Angelica, James, and Annette, joined the procession all in tears; Roger himself, who felt himself obliged to fall upon his knees as his God passed his cabin-door, walked near his wife. Soon almost the whole village, men and women, came to swell the attendance, and to honour the Holy Sacrament.

Before entering the house, the venerable pastor gave a benediction to the crowd who surrounded him; and all prostrated themselves before the God, whom, for a long time, they had despised and offended.

Virginia heard the sound of the bell, and asked Rosalia to raise her a little. The latter, assisted by Marian, placed her as she desired, and supported her during the whole ceremony. M. Marcet was upon her knees in a corner of the chamber, and appeared almost insensible to what passed before her.

When Virginia saw her divine Saviour enter the room, with rapturous emotion she exclaimed, "Behold the beloved—oh, how beloved!—of my heart!" The priest spoke a few words of exhortation and consolation, and then gave to this spotless lamb the Bread of Angels.

Who can express the consolations, the delights, which the Lord imparts to the faithful soul, whom he thus visits? And would you wish to know how many blessings such a soul experiences, come to the side of Virginia, as she lies upon her bed of pain, and mark the interior satisfaction, the supernatural peace, the angelic sweetness that beams in her features.

The priest left her for some time, to hold a loving commune with her Saviour; then returned, and administered extreme unction. He exhorted her to patience, resignation, and perfect abandonment of her own to the divine will; and promised to return as soon as he was able.

Mathurin, his two sons, and all who had assisted at the ceremony, were deeply moved. The old man wept at the sight of the daughter of his former lord, thus laid upon her bed of death. His tears were tears of sincere grief, and paternal tenderness; and they flowed yet more abundantly when he reflected on her youth, her amiable soul, her ardent piety, and the wretched state of her mother.

He had not strength to return to Mareuil; and therefore Francis and Philip accompanied the blessed Sacrament alone. As far as the end of the village, the inhabitants of the place escorted their Lord and Redeemer. It seemed that the presence of Jesus in this poor hamlet, had drawn down the grace of salvation, and that these peasants had not received his benediction in vain.

The state of Virginia did not improve; her pains were no less severe, but she seemed to have received more strength to support them. She had written, some days before, to the superioress of the convent where she had been educated, to beg the prayers of the religious and her former companions. She received an answer the day after the last Sacraments had been administered. The arrival of the letter afforded her the greatest pleasure. She opened it, and gave it Rosalia to read.....

"Rosalia," said the patient, when it was concluded, "you must give them the intelligence of my death. When I shall be no more, you will tender my gratitude to the venerable nun, and you will ask all to remember me in their prayers."

"But, my dear, there is yet hope."

"Hope, Rosalia? There is none at present, save in heaven. God does not wish to expose me to the dangers of the world; let us bless his providence. I am going sooner than any of you, but we shall shortly meet again, never more to part."

Madame Marcet was leaning on the pillow of her child, and watered it with her scalding tears. "Dear Virginia," said she, "speak not thus."

"Yes, mother," was the feeble reply, "all is over. Pray to God for me. If, as I hope, he will show mercy to me, I will pray most ardently, that you may always love him, Good mother, pardon me any uneasiness I may have caused you—give me your blessing."

M. Marcet made an effort to rise, and blessed her dying child.

The effect which it had on her, was such, that she fell fainting into the arms of Rosalia.

They carried her into an adjoining chamber. How grieved was Virginia! Such a trial was beyond her

strength. Her breathing grew more difficult; a darkness came over her eyes; she asked, in a feeble voice, for a crucifix. She grasped it with devotion, and pressed it to her lips; a tear rolled down her cheek; ah! it fell upon her Saviour's side. Did it not open a way to his sacred heart?

Providence sent at this moment the pastor of Mareuil. Virginia recognized his voice, and testified, as well as she was able, how agreeable was his presence. The venerable priest spoke of God to the dying girl, who often repeated with fervour the words "Jesus and Mary." He began the prayers for the dying, but ere he had finished, Virginia was enjoying the sight of her beloved.

Her spirit had passed calmly away, and I ween her guardian angel was waiting near, for the moment to her so precious.

CARITAS.

(To be continued.)

ACCOUNT OF THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON.

VIRTUE, says Virgil, is better accepted when it comes in a pleasing form. The person of Crichton was eminently beautiful; but his beauty was consistent with such activity and strength, that in fencing he would spring at one bound upon his antagonist; and he used the sword in either hand with such force and dexterity, that scarce any one had courage to engage him.

Having studied at St. Andrews, in Scotland, he went to Paris in his twenty-first year, and affixed on the gate of the college of Navarre, a kind of challenge to the learned of that university, to dispute with them on a certain day; offering to his opponents the choice of ten languages, and of all the faculties and sciences. On the day appointed, three thousand auditors assembled, when four doctors of the church and fifty ministers appeared against him: and one of his antagonists confesses that the doctors were defeated; that he gave proofs of knowledge beyond the reach of man, and that a hundred years passed without food or sleep would not be sufficent for the attainment of his learning. After a disputation of nine hours, he was presented by the president and professors with a diamond and a purse of gold, and dismissed with repeated acclamations.

From Paris he went to Rome, where he made the same challenge, and had, in the presence of the pope and cardinals, the same success. He then visited Padua, where he engaged in another public disputation, beginning his performance with an extempore poem in praise of the city and the assembly present, and concluding with an oration equally unpremeditated in commendation of ignorance.

These acquisitions of learning, however stupendous, were not gained by the omission of any accomplishment in which it becomes a gentleman to excel. He practised in great perfection, the arts of drawing and painting; he was an eminent performer in both vocal and instrumental music; he danced with uncommon gracefulness; and on the day after his disputation at Paris, exhibited his skill in horsemanship before the court of France, where, at a public match of tilting,

re away the ring upon his lance fifteen times together.

xtensive was his acquaintance with life and manners,

n Italian comedy composed by himself, and exhibited

he court of Mantua, he is said to have personated fifteen different characters. His memory was so retentive that, hearing an oration of an hour, he would repeat it exactly and in the recital follow the speaker through all the variety of tone and gesticulation.

Nor was his skill in arms less than in learning, or his courage inferior to his skill. There was a prize-fighter at Mantua, who had defeated the most celebrated masters in many parts of Europe; and in Mantua had killed three who appeared against him. Crichton, looking on his sanguinary success with indignation, offered to stake fifteen hundred pistoles, and mount the stage against him. The duke of Mantua with some reluctance consented: and on the day fixed the combatants appeared.

The prize-fighter advanced with great violence and fierceness, while Crichton contented himself calmly to ward his passes, and suffered him to waste his vigour by his own fury. Crichton then pressed upon him with such force and agility, that he thrust him thrice through the body, and saw him expire. He then divided the prize he had won among the widows whose husbands had been killed.

The duke of Mantua having received such proofs of his various merit, made him tutor to his son Vicentio di Gonzaga, a prince of loose manners and a turbulent disposition. But his honour was of short duration; for, as he was one night in the time of Carnival, rambling about the streets with his guitar in his hand, he was attacked by six men masked, and opposed them with such vigour and address, that he dispersed them, and disarmed their leader, who, throwing off his mask, discovered himself to be the prince his pupil. Crichton falling on his knees, presented his own sword to the prince, who seized it, and instigated, as some say, by jealousy, according to others only by drunken fury, thrust him through the heart.

SONNET FROM VINCENZIO DA FILICAJA.

SEE a fond mother and her offspring round,
Her soft soul melting with maternal love,
Some to her breast she clasps, and others prove
By kisses her affection: on the ground
Her ready foot affords a rest for one;
Another smiling sits upon her knee;
By their desiring eyes and actions free,
And lisping words their little wants are known—
To those she gives a smile, a frown to these,
But all in love. Thus awful Providence
Watches and helps us—oft denies our sense
But to invite more earnest prayer and praise,
Or by withholding that which we implore,
In the refusal gives a blessing more.

There are certain dispositions which appear full of mildness and sweetness, as long as every thing goes their own way; but the moment any contradiction or adversity arises, in an instant they are in a flame, and begin to rage like a burning mountain. Such people as these are like red-hot coals hidden under ashes. This is not the mildness which our Lord undertook to teach us, in order to make us like unto himself. We ought to be like lilies in the midst of thorns, which, however they be pricked and pierced, never lose their sweet and gentle fragrance.—*St. Bernard.*

Whenever you are engaged in bringing about a reconciliation between enemies, in composing a law-suit, or in persuading another to do something, endeavour always to be as mild as possible. You will always do more, and prevail farther, by yielding and humbling yourself, than by austerity and over earnestness. Does not every one know that more flies are caught by a single ounce of honey, than by a hundred barrels of vineger?—*St. Francis of Sales.*

NOVEMBER.

The wood-path is carpeted over with leaves,
The glories of AUTUMN decay;
The Goddess of Plenty has bound up her sheaves,
And carried the *harvest* away,
With dissonant guns, hills and valleys resound,
The swains through the coppices rove;
The *partridges* bleed on the dry stubble ground,
The *pheasants* lie dead in the grove.

Gloomy as this month usually is, yet there are some intervals of clear and pleasant weather; the mornings are, occasionally, sharp, but the hoarfrost is soon dissipated by the sun, and a fine open day follows.

A few soft days succeed
Of pleasing mildness; but the varying storm
By fits prevails, or, wrapped in terror, whirls
The last, the lingering honours from the grove.

The trees are now stripped of their foliage. The separation of the leaves from their branches is termed the *fall;* and, in North America, the season in which this takes place is universally known by that name. The falling of leaves is not always in consequence of the injuries of autumnal frosts, for some trees have their appropriate period of defoliation, seemingly independent of external causes. The lime (*tilia europœa*) commonly loses it leaves before any frost happens; the ash seems, on the contrary, to wait for that event; and at whatever period the first rather sharp frost takes place, all its leaves fall at once. The fall of the leaf can be considered only as a "sloughing or casting off diseased or worn-out parts," whether the injury to their constitution may arise from external causes or from an exhaustion of their vital powers. Hence a separation takes place, either in the foot-stalk, or more usually at its base, and the dying part quits the vigorous one, which is promoted by the weight of the leaf itself, or by the action of autumnal winds upon its expanded form. Sometimes, as in the hornbeam, the beech, and some oaks, the swelling of the buds for the ensuing season is necessary to accomplish the total separation of the old stalks from the insertions.

How fall'n the glories of these fading scenes!
The dusky *beech* resigns his vernal greens;
The yellow *maple* mourns in sickly hue,
And russet woodlands crown the dark'ning view.
Dim, clust'ring fogs involve the country round;
The valley, and the blended mountain ground,
Sink in confusion: but with tempest wing,
Should Boreas from his northern barrier spring,
The rushing woods with deaf'ning clamour roar,
Like the sea tumbling on the pebbly shore:
When spouting rains descend in torrent tides,
See the torn zig-zag weep its channelled sides. WHITE.

Leaves undergo very considerable changes before they fall; ceasing to grow for a long time previous to their decay, they become gradually more rigid and less juicy, often parting with their pubescence, and always changing their healthy green colour to more or less of a yellow, sometimes a reddish hue. "One of the first trees that becomes naked is the walnut; the mulberry, horse-chesnut, sycamore, lime, and ash, follow. The elm preserves its verdure for some time longer: the beech and ash are the latest deciduous forest trees in dropping their leaves. All lopped trees, while their heads are young, carry their leaves a long while. Apple-trees and peaches remain green very late, often till the end of November; young beeches never cast their leaves till spring, when the new leaves sprout, and push them off; in the autumn, the beachen leaves turn of a yellow deep chesnut colour."

The effect of a "whirl-blast," or sudden gust of wind, accompanied with hail (not unfrequent at this season), on the falling leaves, is thus prettily and naturally delineated by the poet of the mountains:—

But see! where'er the hailstones drop,
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and every where,
Along the floor, beneath the shade,
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Goodfellow were there,
And all those leaves in festive glee
Were dancing to the minstrelsy. WORDSWORTH.

A *tree* has ever been considered as an *emblem of life;* and in this view, this pleasing object in nature, which we meet with in every direction, is replete with instruction. The contemplative mind regards it with peculiar interest, and derives from it no inconsiderable improvement. The elegant 'Gilpin' has availed himself of this striking resemblance in the following beautiful reflections:

As I sat carelessly at my window (he observes), and cast my eyes upon a large acacia which grew before me, I conceived that it might aptly represent a country divided into *provinces, towns,* and *families.* The large branches might hold out the first—the smaller branches connected with them, the second—and those combinations of collateral leaves which specify the acacia might represent families composed of *individuals.* It was now late in the year, and the autumnal tints had taken possession of great part of the tree.

As I sat looking at it, many of the yellow leaves (which having been produced earlier decayed sooner) were continually dropping into the lap of their great mother. Here was an emblem of *natural decay*—the most obvious appearence of mortality.

As I continued looking, a gentle breeze rustled among the leaves. Many fell, which in a natural course might have enjoyed life louger. Here *malady* was added to decay.

The blast increased, and every branch which presented itself bowed before it. A shower of leaves covered the ground. The cup of retribution, said I, is poured out upon the people. Pestilence shakes the land. Nature sickens in the gale: they fall by multitudes. Whole families are cut off together.

Among the branches was one entirely withered. The leaves were shrivelled, yet clinging to it. Here was an emblem of *famine.* The nutriment of life was stopped. Existence was just supported, but every form was emaciated and shrunk.

In the neighbourhood stretched a branch not only shrivelled and withered, but, having been more exposed to winds, it was almost entirely stripped of its leaves. Here and there hung a solitary leaf just enough to show that the whole had lately been alive. Ah! said I, here is an emblem of *depopulation.* Some violent cause hath laid waste the land. Towns and villages, as well as families, are desolated: scarcely ten are left alive to bemoan a thousand.

How does every thing around us bring its lesson to our minds! *Nature is the great book of God.* In every page is instruction to those who will read. Mortality must claim its due. Death in various shapes hovers round us.—Thus far went the heathen moralist. He had learned no other knowledge from these perishing forms of nature, but that men, like trees, are subject to death.

The meanest herb we trample in the field
Or in the garden nurture, when its leaf
In *Autumn* DIES, forebodes another *Spring,*
And from short slumber wakes to life again.
Man wakes no more! Man, peerless, valiant, wise;
Once chilled by death, sleeps hopeless in the dust,
A long, unbroken, never-ending sleep. MOSCHUS.

Better instructed, learn thou a nobler lesson. Learn that the God who, with the blast of winter, shrivels the tree, and with the breezes of spring restores it, offers it to thee as an emblem of thy hopes! The same God presides over the natural and moral world: His works are uniform. The truths which nature teaches are the truths of revelation also. It is written in both these books, that the power which revives the tree will revive thee also like it, with increasing excellence and improvement.

Happy he,
Whom what he views of beautiful, or grand,
In nature from the broad majestic OAK
To the green *blade* that twinkles in the Sun,
Prompt with remembrance of a PRESENT GOD.
COWPER.

Bishop HORNE has a beautiful little Poem on this subject, which is too interesting to be omitted in this place; we can have no better companion in our autumnal walks than these fine moral stanzas:—

See the leaves around us falling,
Dry and withered to the ground!
Thus to thoughtless mortals calling
With a sad and solemn sound:—

'Sons of Adam—once in Eden,
Blighted when like us you fell,
Hear the lecture we are reading,
'Tis, alas! the *truth* we tell.

'*Virgins!* much, too much presuming,
In your boasted white and red,
View us late in beauty blooming,
Numbered now among the dead.

'*Griping Misers!* nightly waking,
See the end of all your care;
Fled on wings of our own making,
We have left our owners bare.

'*Sons of Honour!* fed on praises,
Flutt'ring high on fancied worth,
Lo! the fickle air that raises
Brings us down to parent Earth.

'*Learned Sophs!* in systems jaded,
Who for new ones daily call,
Cease at length by us persuaded,
Every leaf must have a fall.

'YOUTHS! though yet no losses grieve you,
Gay in health and manly grace,
Let not cloudless skies deceive you—
Summer gives to Autumn place.

'*Venerable Sires!* grown hoary,
Hither turn th' unwilling eye;
Think amid your falling glory,
Autumn tells a Winter nigh.

'Yearly in our course returning,
Messengers of shortest stay,
Thus we preach this truth unerring,
Heaven and Earth shall pass away!

'On the *Tree of Life* Eternal
MAN! let all thy hopes be stay'd,
Which alone, for ever vernal,
Bears a leaf which ne'er shall fade!'

The Virginia creeper (*hedera quinque-folia*) is particularly rich and beautiful in the autumnal months, with its leaves of every hue, from a bright to a dark green and deep crimson.

That highly-esteemed fish, the *salmon*, now ascends rivers to deposit its spawn in their gravelly beds, at a great distance from their mouths. In order to arrive at the spots proper for this purpose, there are scarcely any obstacles which the fish will not surmount. They will ascend rivers for hundreds of miles; force themselves against the most rapid streams, and spring with amazing agility over cataracts of several feet in height. They are taken, according to Mr. Pennant, in the Rhine, as high as Basle: they gain the sources of the Lapland rivers, in spite of their torrent-like currents: they surpass the perpendicular falls of Leixlip, Kennerth, and Pont Aberglasslyn. At the latter of these places, Mr. Pennant assures us that he has himself witnessed the efforts of the salmon, and seen scores of fish, some of which succeeded, while others miscarried, in the attempt, during the time of observation. At this time, nets or baskets are placed under the fall, and numbers are taken after an unsuccessful leap. It may be added, that the salmon, like the swallow, is said to return, each season, to the self-same spot to deposit its spawn.

The stock-dove (*columba œnas*), one of the latest winter birds of passage, arrives from more northern regions, towards the end of this month. Before our beechen woods were destroyed (observes Mr. White), there were myriads of them, reaching in strings for miles together. At this time, twenty have been killed in a day; and an old sportsman assured me, that, with a large fowling-piece, he had shot seven or eight at a time on the wing, as they came wheeling over his head. The food of these numberless emigrants was beech-mast and some acorns, and particularly barley, which they collected in the stubbles; they also eat the young tops of turnips.

All the pride
Of the SWEET GARDEN fades. Where now the *rose*,
The *lupin*, *aster*, *balsam*, or *carnation*?
Or where the *lily*, with her snowy bells?
Where the gay *jasmin*, odorous *syringa*,
Graceful *laburnum*, or bloom-clad *arbute*?
Or if we stray, where now the summer's walk
So still and peaceable at early eve,
Along the shady lane, or through the wood,
To pluck the ruddy *strawberry*, or smell
The perfumed breeze that all the fragrance stole
Of *honey-suckle*, blossomed *beans*, or *clover*?
Where now the blush of Spring, and the long day
Beloitered? cheerful May, that filled the woods
With music, scattered the green vale with flow'rs,
And hung a smile of universal joy
Upon the cheek of nature? Where blooms now
The *king-cup* or the *daisy*? Where inclines
The *harebell* or the *cowslip*? Where looks gay
The vernal *furze* with golden baskets hung?
Where captivates the sky-blue *periwinkle*
Under the cottage-eaves? Where waves the leaf,
Or rings with harmony the merry vale?
Day's harbinger no song performs, no song
Or solo anthem deigns sweet Philomel.
The golden *wood-pecker* laughs loud no more.
The *pye* no longer prates; no longer scolds
The saucy *jay*. Who sees the *goldfinch* now
The feathered *groundsel* pluck, or hears him sing
In bower of *apple blossoms* perched? Who sees
The chimney-haunting *swallow* skim the pool,
And quaintly dip, or hears his early song
Twittered to dawning day? All, all are hushed.
The very *bee* her merry toil foregoes,
Nor seeks her *nectar*, to be sought in vain.
Only the solitary ROBIN sings,
And, perched aloft, with melancholy note
Chants out the dirge of Autumn; cheerless bird,
That loves the brown and desolated scene,
And scanty fare of Winter.

The females and young of the brown, or *Norway rat*, now leave their holes at the sides of ponds and rivers, to which they had betaken themselves in the spring, and repair to barns, outhouses, corn-stacks, and dwellings. The males are said to remain in their holes, having laid up a winter store of acorns, beech-mast, &c. It is supposed that a rat will consume half a peck of wheat in a week, which may be set, at least, at sixteen pence; and if a man has only two score quartered upon him (and well off is that farm which has so few), their board will stand the farmer in upwards of *fifty shillings* a week,—the rent of a good farm.

The *woodman* now repairs to the woodlands to fell coppices, underwood, and timber. The appearance of a wood with the underwood cut, or during the time of cutting, is a very pleasing sight. The fine majestic trees opened to view, which were before hidden among the general and thick mass of foliage or branches, the smaller wood, some laid up in poles, some in faggots, and some in logs; while the ground presents a soft treading of moss and leaves among the old stumps, which are for the most part covered with moss and ivy. In the spring, this carpet is enriched with the flowers of the primrose, the ox-lip, and the cowslip, the wood anemone, the hyacinth, and a variety of others; and the scene is, perhaps, diversified by the trunks of oaks stripped of their bark, and the bark laid up in piles of regular dimensions, ready to be carried away by the tanner. In places where charcoal is made, there is the additional circumstance of the heaps of wood covered over with sods, and smoking: the curls of blue smoke seen at a little distance, ascending against the wood, are very picturesque.

The farmer usually finishes his ploughing this month. Cattle and horses are taken into the farm-yard; sheep are sent to the turnip-field; ant-hills are destroyed; and bees are put under shelter.

We shall close this month's Diary with the following *poetical bouquet* of wild flowers, which cannot fail of being acceptable to our readers in the gloomy month of *November*, when scarcely a flower is to be found, except by those who possess the luxury of a green-house and hot-house, a never-ending source of amusement and instruction to the juvenile botanist and admirer of the beauties of nature. The several flowers are described with a truth and delicacy that do equal credit to the refined taste and botanical knowledge of the fair author.

Fair rising from her icy couch
Wan herald of the floral year,
The *snow-drop* marks the spring's approach,
Ere yet the primrose groups appear,

Or peers the *autumn*[1] from its spotted veil,
Or odorous *violets* scent the cold capricious gale.

Then, thickly strewn in woodland bowers,
Anemonies their stars unfold,
There spring the *sorrel's* veined flowers,
And rich in vegetable gold.
From calyx pale, the freckled *cowslip* born,
Receives in amber cups the fragrant dews of morn.

Lo! the green *thorn* her silver buds
Expands to May's enliv'ning beam;
Hottonia[2] blushes on the floods,
And where the slowly trickling stream
Mid grass and spiry rushes stealing glides,
Her lovely fringed flowers fair *menyanthus*[3] hides.

In the lone copse, or shadowy dale,
Wild clustered knots of *harebells* blow,
And droops the *lily* of the vale.
O'er *vinca's*[4] matted leaves below
The *orchis* race with varied beauty charm,
And mock the exploring *bee* or *fly's* aerial form.

Wound in the hedge-row's oaken boughs,
The *woodbine's* tassels float in air,
And, blushing, the uncultured *rose*
Hangs high her beauteous blossoms there;
Her fillets there the purple *nightshade* weaves,
And the *brionia* winds her pale and scolloped leaves.

To later Summer's fragrant breath
Clemati's[5] feathery garlands dance;
The hollow *fox-glove* nods beneath,
While to tall *mullein's* yellow lance,
Dear to the mealy tribe of ev'ning towers,
And the weak *gallium*[6] weaves its myriad fairy flowers.

Sheltering the *coot's* or *wild-duck's* nest,
And where the timid *halcyon* hides,
The *willow-herb*, in crimson drest,
Waves with *arundo* o'er the tides;
And there the bright *nymphæa*[7] loves to lave,
Or spreads her golden orbs upon the dimpling wave.

And *thou*, by pain and sorrow blest,
Papaver[8] that an opiate dew
Conceal'st beneath thy scarlet vest,
Contrasting with the *corn-flower* blue,
Autumnal months behold thy gauzy leaves
Bend in the rustling gale amid the tawny sheaves.

From the first bud, whose venturous head
The *Winter's* lingering tempest braves,
To those which, mid the foliage dead,
Sink latest to their *annual* grave,
All are for *health*, or *food*, or *pleasure* given,
And speak in various ways the bounteous hand of Heaven!

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

1 Cuckoo Pint. 2 Water violet. 3 Bogbean. 4 Periwinkle.
5 Virgin's bower. 6 Yellow lady's bed-straw 7 White water lily.
8 Common poppy.

PASSING BELLS.

The subject of Passing Bells, and indeed the history of this sonorous instrument of percussion in general is so curious, that we shall subjoin some observations thereon. For many of which, as for the authorities, we are indebted to Bourne, and to Brand, in the Popular Antiquities.

Bourne considers the custom of the Passing Bell as old as the use of bells themselves in Christian churches about the seventh century. Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History, speaking of the death of the Abbess of St. Kilda, tells us, that one of the sisters of a distant monastery, as she was sleeping, thought she heard the wellknown sound of that bell which called them to prayers, when any of them had departed this life. Bourne thinks the custom originated in the religious idea of the prevalency of prayers for the dead. The Abbess of the monastery above alluded to had no sooner heard the bell, than she raised all the sisters and called them into the church, where she exhorted them to pray fervently, and sing a requiem for the soul of their mother.

The same author contends that this bell, contrary to the present custom, ought to be rung before the parties were dead, that their friends might pray for them; this was formerly the case, and we doubt not gave origin to the first tolling and then ringing the bell: for the ringing, which is a greater play of the bell, whereby both sides are hit by the clapper, commenced just at the death of the parties prayed for, in order to direct the change in the form of prayer to begin.

Fuller, in his "Good Thoughts in Worse Times," 12mo. Lond. 1647, p. 3, has the following very curious passage:—"Hearing a Passing Bell, I prayed that the sick man might have, through Christ, a safe voyage to his long home. Afterwards I understood that the party was dead some hours before.

Dr. Zouch, in a Note on the Life of Sir Henry Wotton, Walton's Lives, 4to. York, 1796, p. 144, says, "The soul bell was tolled before the departure of a person out of life, as a signal for good men to offer up their prayers for the dying. 'Aliquo moriente Campanae debent pulsari, ut Populus hoc audiens oret pro illo.' Durandi Rationale." He is citing Donne's Letter to Sir Henry Wotton in verse:

"And thicken on you now, as prayers ascend
To heaven on troops at a good man's Passing Bell."

The following simile expresses well the heavy knell of large Soul Bells:—

"Night Jars and Ravens, with wide stretched throats
From Yews and Hollies send their baleful notes—
The ominous Raven with a dismal cheer
Through his hoarse beak of following horror tells,
Begetting strange imaginary fear,
With heavy echos like to Passing Bells."

There are some minor laws and regulations with respect to the mode of ringing the Passing Bell in our parish churches, and indeed in those of most European countries, which may be noticed here for the information of the general reader. When a person dies, immediate notice is given to the Clerk, or Sexton, who causes to be rung in consequence a greater or less bell, according to the rank, age, or youth of the parties. Thus a grandee has always the aid of the greatest bell, the soul of a very old person is allowed the same privilege, the common people a smaller one, and a lesser bell still for children. But whatever may be the rank of the parties the rule for the mode of ringing the bell is not changed, sex alone determining this. At first the bell is what they call tolled, that is, the clapper hits only one side of it, and the wheel has but little play, the sound of tolling being deep and mournful: after tolling awhile, they raise the bell by a larger play of the wheel, and the clapper hits the two sides alternately as the wheel revolves backwards and forwards, this is ringing it out; they then lower it again, and give three solemn strokes three times repeated for a man, and two or three times repeated for a woman.

When a ringer dies they honour his departing spirit with a dumb peal, the clappers of all the bells being muffled so as to give a dull sound.

There is this passage in Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth, Part II.

"And his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell
Remembered knolling a departing friend."

Some Antiquaries think that the Soul Bell or Passing Bell was originally intended to drive away any demon that might seek to take possession of the soul of the deceased. In the cuts to those Horæ which contain the service of the dead, several devils are waiting for this purpose in the chamber of the dying man, to whom the priest is administering extreme unction.

Many weak persons feel uncomfortable at the sound of the bell at eight in the evening, commonly rung in most parishes, which is a remnant of the Curfew, merely because its dismal and measured strokes resemble those of the Passing Bell. A gentleman mentioned to us the peculiar melancholy effect which it had on him when he first left home, and heard it from the steeple of Bury St. Edmonds the first night of his journey.

In Ray's Collection of old English Proverbs, we find the following verse:—

"When thou dost hear a toll or knell,
Then think upon thy Passing Bell.
When the bell begins to toll,
Lord, have mercy on the soul."

THE LIFE OF GERARD MAJELLA.

(Continued from page 415.)

Some of the students belonging to the Novitiate at Illicete being very desirous to visit the holy grotto of the Archangel Michael on mount Gurgano, obtained permission from the rector, who appointed Gerard to accompany them. The pious brother could not have had a greater pleasure than permission to visit and honour his beloved protector. While but a young boy, he had one day approached to receive communion, when the priest, struck with his very youthful appearance, passed him by. Gerard withdrew much grieved; but God, who saw the love and purity of his young heart, sent the Archangel the following night to administer to him the holy communion. "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such are the kingdom of heaven."

But let us return to the pilgrims. They had among them thirty curlini, (about 12 or 13 shillings), to defray the expense of twelve persons during ten days. They showed the little sum to Gerard, who quietly replied, "God will provide." And they set out on their journey with two donkeys to carry their baggage.

When they arrived at Foggia, they immediately went to visit the miraculous image of the blessed Virgin, regarding which some remarkable circumstances are detailed in the life of St. Alphonsus de Liguori. As soon as it was known they were in the town, several ecclesiastics and other gentlemen came to visit them, for Gerard's fame was spread every where. They proposed to him many ascetic questions, and theological cases, and throughout the poor lay brother showed himself master of every subject. A nun of the monastery of the Annunciation desiring to see him, he warned her to prepare for death; and though then in perfect health, she died within four months after.

As they proceeded on their journey, Gerard seeing the young man overpowered with fatigue, hired a little carriage. "But how can we pay for it?" they demanded. "God will provide," said Gerard.

By and bye, the two donkeys refused to go further, and they were still nine miles from Manfredonia. The driver proposed to leave the beasts at a small inn on the road; but Gerard smiled, and giving them a blow in the name of God, they set off at a gallop, and never stopped until the end of the journey. The purse, however, was nearly empty when they arrived at Manfredonia; but Gerard, far from losing confidence, bought several bouquets of violets which he saw for sale, and going straight to the church, placed them on the altar before the tabernacle, saying to Jesus Christ, "Thou must take care of my little family." The Chaplain of the castle observing this devotion, called Majella, and invited him and all his party to lodge with him.

The devotion of Gerard made such an impression on another priest who witnessed him, that he presented him with a silver incensor for the church of his convent, where they had only a copper one.

Next day they continued their route to mount Gurgano, and though they arrived excessively tired, Gerard made them mount on foot in honour of the archangel. Their money was nearly finished; they were hungry, and had nothing to eat, and the young men felt very much embarrassed, but Gerard said, "There is one who thinks of you." He then knelt down to say prayers in honour of the archangel, and while he prayed a stranger approached and put a quantity of silver into his hand, saying, "Recommend me to Jesus Christ." In this manner Providence abundantly supplied their wants.

A still more singular circumstance occurred. They went to an inn to pass the night, and next morning the innkeeper demanded a most exorbitant price. At the sight of such injustice Gerard boldly said, "If you vex me, and demand more than is just and reasonable, your mules will be struck dead." And as he spoke the son of the inn-keeper ran in crying that their best mule lay rolling about in the stable, as if in great agony, and he could not imagine the cause. Terribly frightened, the man immediately became civil and would have taken nothing from them, had not Gerard insisted on paying him his due.

The season was exceedingly dry, and there was such a scarcity of water, that at a little public house at the foot of the mountain, they were refused a drop to quench their thirst. Gerard represented to the man his inhumanity, saying, "God showed pity to the merciful, but sent the hardhearted to hell." He then threatened to dry up his well entirely, unless he relieved their thirst; and his tone of voice was so commanding, that the man instantly supplied them, and never again refused any one.

On their way home they visited, near Foggia, a celebrated church dedicated to the Virgin crowned. Absorbed in the glories of Mary, Gerard fell into an ecstasy; on his recovery one of the students questioning him about it, he replied, "It is an imfirmity from which I suffer."

The whole pilgrimage was a succession of miracles, and on their return they brought much more money back with them than they took away.

If Gerard incessantly sought the cross, it sometimes presented itself unexpectedly, as on the following occasion. The Duke de Borina possessed a large territory near Castellucci, through which a road led to the town, of Foggia. Unwilling that his property should be cut up by this road, he determined to stop it, and accordingly placed guards to prevent people passing that way.

These guards, instead of giving the people fair warning, maltreated them when they found them trespassing. On one occasion Gerard (who knew nothing of the prohibition) was going along the road, when one of the guard came up to him, knocked him off his ass, and struck him brutally on the stomach and bowels with the but-end of his musket. "It is a long time," said he, "since I have sought for a monk to satisfy me, and now you have come ready to my hand," and he continued to beat him most unmercifully. Gerard tried to get on his knees, and beg him to have pity on him, as he knew nothing of the prohibition; but this only served to make the fellow more furious. "Strike, my brother," said Gerard, "then you are right." And he continued to repeat these words, clasping his hands together, until the guard, confounded by such patience, entered into himself, and full of repentance, struck his forehead, flung away his gun, crying, "Oh, what have I done! I have killed a saint." He then threw himself at Gerard's feet to ask pardon, who embraced him and found many excuses for his conduct. He requested him to help him to get on his ass, and support him till he got back to the convent. The guard told afterwards that during the way he uttered no complaint, but tried to show him the hideous nature of sin, and urged him to return to God. When they arrived at the house, Gerard would not blame the man, but said he had fallen from his ass, and made him be well treated for his kindness in bringing him home.

Justice soon overtook the guard. Not long after he attacked a lay brother belonging to another order, who in vain besought him to spare him for love of St. Antony and St. Francis. At length losing patience, the brother sprung upon the fellow, wrested his musket from him, and beat him so severely that he left him senseless. Then taking up the broken musket, he went straight to the duke and exposed to him the manner in which his servants acted. The Duke was so vexed when he heard what had happened, that he withdrew the prohibition, and the road was left free, the guard being dismissed from his service. Not long after he was killed by an accident. Gerard wept when he heard of his death, although his breast was so dreadfully bruised by the blows he had received from him, that he never recovered from the effects.

Never satisfied with himself, he tried to make daily progress in virtue. His life was so perfect that he excited a holy envy in the young, and filled the old with confusion. His director having obliged him to commit to paper his desires, his resolutions, and all that passed between him and God, we will make a few extracts from this precious manuscript.

"To love God, to be always united to him, to do every thing for him, to conform myself always to his holy will, and suffer much for him.

"The happiness of becoming a saint is offered to me once only; if I lose time, it is for ever. I will, therefore, labour to become a saint. Oh God, what is my folly if I do not become a saint! Brother Gerard, resolve from this moment to give thyself to God. Remember that the means of sanctifying thyself, are not by prayer and contemplation only, but the best prayer for thee, is to be as it pleases God thou shouldst be. It is sufficient to have God alone present with thee, and to be always united with him. Every thing done for God, is prayer. Let one engage to do this, and another that, my only engagement is to do the will of God."

"It is infinite pain to suffer, and not suffer for God; but to suffer all, and suffer it for God—it is nothing! I will act on this earth as if there were on it only God and me. If I lose myself, I lose God, and if I lose God, what remains for me to lose?

"I choose the Holy Spirit for my only consolation and protector, may he be my defence and the conqueror of all my passions.

"And thou my only joy, immaculate Virgin Mary, be my second protectress and consolation in all that happens—be ever my advocate with God, that I may accomplish my good resolution. I beseech you, spirits of the blessed, to be my advocates with the Creator of the universe. I write this in your presence, that from the height of heaven you may read it, and obtain from the divine Majesty that I may become a saint. My God, for love of thee, I will obey my superiors as I would thy divine person. I will refuse all pleasure, that is to say, I will never do my own will, and my riches shall be the misery of this earth.

"Among all the virtues which are agreeable to thee, my God, that which pleases me most is purity. Oh! divine purity, deliver me from every evil thought that could sully my soul.

"I will never speak but in three cases: When it is for the glory of God; when it is for the good of my neighbour, or when it is absolutely necessary. I will never say either good or evil of myself. I will never excuse myself, even when I have every reason to do so, unless when it would offend God, or injure my neighbour. I will not reply when I am reproached. I will accuse no one, nor speak of their faults even in jest. I will always excuse my neighbour, considering in him the person of Jesus Christ when wrongfully accused by the Jews. I will especially do this in his absence. I will be careful to give others no cause to be impatient, and when I see some fault committed, I will speak to the person when I find him alone, with the tenderest charity and in a low voice. I will never meddle with other peoples' affairs. I will try never to yield to feelings contrary to reason; and if any one reproves or accuses me, I will wait until the bitter feeling be passed and calmness restored. In order to do what God wills, it is necessary that I should not do my own will. I will employ the time of silence in meditating on the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and the sorrows of the blessed Virgin Mary. My prayers, my communions, and all that I do, shall be offered for the conversion of poor sinners. I will show to all priests every possible respect, as if they were the person of Jesus Christ. And even when they are what they ought not to be, I will consider in them the high dignity of the priesthood. By these vows I oblige myself to do always that which is most perfect."

Gerard was not one of those inconstant souls, who promise all while their fervour lasts, but abandon all when overtaken by aridity and dryness. He was firm in his resolutions, strengthening himself by saying, "God is the same to-day as he was yesterday." His obedience was so perfect, that those who commanded him needed to weigh their words well, for he obeyed them literally. One day father Cafaro treating something he proposed with contempt said, "Go hide yourself in the oven." Gerard obeyed exactly. But when the baker was kindling the fire to make bread, he was frightened at seeing him in the oven, and ran for father C. as Gerard would not come out until he got permission.

He always obeyed to the letter, without attempting to interpret an order. Going from Ciorani to Castellamare, F. Rosse bid him take the ass with him, and he led the beast the whole way without ever attempting to mount him. When he returned footsore, after a walk of thirty miles, F. R. inquired the reason. "Your reverence," replied Gerard, "told me to take the ass with me, and I have done it." He had such confidence in obedience, that he feared no danger. On one occasion being at Carbonara he was called to Melfi. He had to cross a river much swollen by the rain, but obedience called him, and danger was no obstacle. In the middle of the stream, a tree torn up by the roots came rapidly down, threatening to carry him with it; but he calmly made the sign of the cross on it, and the tree turned at the moment, and passed by his side.

God assisted him in a special manner in practising this virtue. A mental sign from his superiors, even when he was at a distance, was sufficient to bring him. Father Fiocchi being one day at Melfi with M. Basta, and speaking in praise of Gerard said, "I will show you the length to which God favours him." Then recollecting himself a moment, he interiorly commanded him to come. Gerard was then at Ilicito, and at the moment he said to the superior of the house, that the father Rector wished him to go to Melfi. He set out, arrived, and when asked what brought him, replied, "I am come because your reverence called me."

His humility was as admirable as his obedience. Penetrated with a low opinion of himself, there was no humiliations, no contempts that he did not think he deserved; he embraced them with joy, and regarded them as a great gain. He was sometimes so penetrated with his own nothingness, and his ingratitude towards God, that he felt as if hell were too good for him. He would embrace the earth and call on it to hide him from the eyes of men. He esteemed himself the worst of all, and when no one paid any attention to him, he was then content. He took pleasure in being allowed to feed on what others had left. Father Cafaro, to try his obedience and humility, commanded him one day to give an account of his conscience to another lay-brother; he did it most exactly, and without the least repugnance.

One of the canons of Conra hearing of the extraordinary virtue of this lay-brother, would not believe it; and being at Atella preaching during Lent, he one day found Gerard in the sacristy surrounded by priests and gentlemen. "What are you doing here," said he, with an air of great contempt, "you are but an ignorant lay-brother, and you pretend to be a theologian. I am astonished that these gentlemen who know you, can treat you as they do." The others looked confounded, but Gerard received the rebuke with the greatest humility. It happened that the canon and he both lodged in the house of the lord of Graziola, and when the former returned to the house, he chanced to go into Gerard's room, and found him in an ecstasy, elevated several feet from the ground. This low opinion of himself, rendered him perfect in the virtue of poverty. The worst clothes in the house were always for him. His bed room at Ilicito was an old oven, in which he placed a straw mattress, and used two bricks for a pillow. One of the fathers had the curiosity to examine this mattress, and found it full of stones and thistles. Such was his couch, and he surrounded it with several skulls. A lay-brother asked him why he treated himself so cruelly. "I do it," he replied, "because I merit it, and I do it for my Creator and my God." When afterwards he had a chamber like the others, he continually gave it up to strangers and slept on the floor of the church. When he happened to be at any of the other convents, if they forgot to assign him a chamber, he would go to the stable and lie on the straw beside the animals.

Prayer and mortification were virtues in which he daily progressed. All his spare time was spent in the church before the blessed Sacrament, or in his room, at the foot of a crucifix, and during his whole life he never omitted passing several hours of the night in the church.

He carried the mortification of his palate almost to excess, and at length God granted him the favour he had long desired, to lose all sensation of taste.

He signalised himself particularly by his charity. Employed as a tailor he provided for the wants of all, and despoiled himself to supply those who needed. During a very rigorous winter he was found to have deprived himself of all his under garments to supply the wants of others.

His favourite occupation was tending the sick, and strangers were equally the objects of his care. He particularly signalised himself by the assistance he gave to an hermit who died in the house. This man's malady required great care, and besides it was of such a disgusting nature, that every one but Gerard feared to approach him. Notwithstanding his pious cares, the poor wretch profited little by them; for some time after his death, as the good brother was praying for the repose of his soul, he appeared to him and said, "Pray not for me, I am damned by the just judgment of God." Gerard was so frightened by the extreme hideousness of the apparition, that he never could forget it while he lived. His charity knew no bounds; he was ready to serve every body. Going one day from Melfi to Atella with some young candidates for ordination, he found several persons detained on the banks of a river in consequence of a flood. Gerard was touched with compassion, for they were poor labourers who were prevented getting to their work; he therefore carried them over behind him on horse-back, one by one; and when warned of the danger, he replied, "We must love our neighbour;" and turning to the animal he rode, he said, "My good horse, let us give pleasure to our God."

He could not look on a poor person without being touched with compassion. Going one day to Iliceto, he met a poor man who carried with difficulty a load of wood on his head. Gerard took it from him and carried it on his own shoulders the whole way. Another time he met a poor old woman carrying a heavy basket of linen, and he immediately took the load and carried it himself. At the entrance of the town he felt rather ashamed of his burden, but he surmounted the feeling, and went with the linen to the place of its destination.

If he were careful about the wants of others, he was perfectly indifferent regarding his own. When he was sent anywhere, if his superiors forgot to supply what was necessary, he never asked for it. One day being sent a great distance on foot, and the person in charge having forgotten to give him his breakfast, he fainted from exhaustion as he entered the church. Another time being ordered to go to Arcoli, and having no shoes, he went with the sandals he wore in the house; and when he entered the town, a troop of boys ran hallooing after him, but he suffered it with joyful indifference.

God distributes His gifts to men in different degrees; but Gerard had a most abundant share. Knowledge of mysteries—prophecy—penetration into the hearts of others—power in speech—empire over the demons—all were united in this great servant of God. His prophecies would fill volumes. Everywhere he was regarded as a great theologian. He seemed to have even a greater knowledge of the consciences of others, than of his own. A gentleman having come to make a retreat in the convent, was so frightened by a sermon he heard, that he thought there was no hope for him, and was about to leave the house, when Gerard walked into his room and said, "What is this, son? Banish from your mind these infernal doubts, for God and the Blessed Virgin are obliged to help you." The gentleman was quite confused at finding his thoughts discovered, but at the same moment these feelings of despair left him. On another occasion during the general communion after a retreat, Gerard ran from the stable to withdraw from the altar a person who was about to make a sacrilegious communion. He drew him apart, and placed his crime before his eyes in such strong colours, that, penetrated with remorse, he ran and threw himself at the feet of his confessor, and discovered to him the stain on his conscience. Returning to the church, he cried aloud, "I was ashamed to confess my sins to the priest, but Gerard has discovered them, and now I come to confess them before all. And he would have done it, had he not been prevented.

To the gift of penetrating the conscience, this holy brother joined the most ardent zeal. His voice was powerful and captivating. You would have said he thundered rather than spoke, for the hardest hearts melted under his influence. When he corrected, amendment followed—when he exposed an iniquity, all had it in horror, and a simple desire of Gerard was a command for all. A great prelate once said of him, "God speaks by his mouth; it is necessary then to second him, not to say obey him."

Time would fail to tell of the multitude of conversions he wrought, of the innumerable souls whom he delivered from the fangs of the demon, and brought to penitence and amendment. Some of the fathers scrupled not to say, that a hundred preachers could not have effected what his zeal and penetration accomplished. The whole country round felt the blessed effect of his labours. Meeting one day in the neighbourhood of Iliceto, a man whose conscience was loaded with crime, he stopped him and spoke with the utmost kindness to him, unveiling to him at the same time the state of his soul, placing his evil deeds before him, especially some crimes known to God alone. The man seeing the inmost recesses of his heart open to Gerard, acknowledged his guilt, wept bitterly, and was led by him immediately to one of the fathers, to whom he confessed with every appearance of the deepest contrition.

Another day when returning to the house, he met a young man who seeing him on foot, clad in a ragged mantle and wearing an old hat, said to him jeeringly, "Art thou a treasure-seeker?" "That is precisely my trade," answered Gerard, "and I will enrich thee." Then drawing his crucifix from his bosom, he continued, "Behold a treasure for which thou art not seeking, but which I will make thee find." He then pointed out to him, with all the ardour of his zeal, the frightful nature of the sins which he had never confessed, and the mumber of years he had lived in the disgrace of God. The young man, touched with compunction, avowed his wickedness. Then Gerard embracing him, led him to the convent, where he remained some days, and left it, blessing the hour in which he had seen such a friend.

Monsigneur Aniceto having laboured ineffectually for several years to reclaim a man whose conduct gave public scandal, at length sent him to make a retreat with the Redemptorists. The man pretended to amend, but he made a sacrilegious confession, concealing some of his worst crimes. When his retreat was finished, and he was about to approach the Holy Table, Gerard stopped him, and asked where he was going. He answered, to receive communion. Transported with zeal, the holy brother replied, "What! you going to communicate when you have not confessed such a sin, nor yet such another. Go instantly and confess your sins, lest the earth open and swallow you up." Stunned and repentant, the man went straight to the confessional.

A backslider who had returned to evil courses, from the mean, but too common motive of human respect, came one day to the convent, and being interrogated by Gerard on the state of his soul, replied that he had every reason to thank God. The brother took him to his own room, and before the crucifix unveiled to him his sins one by one; then crying, "And hast thou the heart to offend thy God in this manner?" and pointing to the image of the Saviour nailed to the cross, he continued, "Who has inflicted these wounds, if not thy iniquities? and what other but thee has drawn the blood from these veins?" At the same moment the blood was seen dropping from all sides of the crucifix. The miserable wretch, touched with the liveliest compunction, went immediately to father Petrella, and told him all that had happened, permitting him to make it publicly known. He left the house an altered man.

Gerard going one day to St. Agatha, felt himself compelled to stop by an interior impulse, when immediately a man approached. The brother accosted him kindly, and asked where he was going. "What is that to thee," replied the man, "go about thy business and leave me to mine." But Gerard would not be repulsed: the man was in despair, he had abandoned himself to the devil. "God has sent me to meet thee and to help thee," said he. And so well did he succeed, that he brought him to the convent, where, after a sincere repentance, he became a man of prayer and mortification, and some years later went to Naples to devote himself to serving the sick in the hospitals.

A zeal such as his, burning for the salvation of souls, could not fail to excite the malice of hell against him. The demons left him no repose, tempting him in every possible way, to turn him from his enterprise. If what we are

about to relate excite the sneer of incredulity, let it be remembered that unbelief is equally unphilosophical and unchristian: both ancient and modern philosophy have recognised the existence of demons, and their interference in human affairs. But to return to our history, many times these evil spirits appeared to him in great numbers during the night, threatening him and maltreating him, to force him to abandon his labours in arresting souls from their dominion. Sometimes they dragged him through the corridors, and one of them once said to him, "Thou wilt not give over, and neither will I till I have chased thee out of the world." He was sometimes so bruised and exhausted, so crushed by these wicked spirits, that he seemed ready to die. One day while he was cooking, several demons fell on him and threw him into the fire. At other times they came upon him like furious dogs, ready to tear him to pieces. "You may bark," said Gerard to them, "but my mother Mary, and Jesus my Saviour are with me, so you cannot bite." Father Juvenal relates that these combats generally occured on Friday night, and that then they redoubled their efforts to frighten him, and make him abandon his manner of life.

Gerard was not only tranquil in presence of the spirits of evil, but he exercised much power over them. Humble and obedient souls triumph over these spirits of pride. He delivered many who were possessed of devils, by the power of his simple word. On one occasion, when he commanded the devil to leave the body of a possessed person, he refused to obey; he then took off his girdle and fastened it round the person, when the devil instantly fled.

One Sunday two young men were seen standing at the side of the church; no one knew who they were, but as soon as Gerard saw them, he walked up to them and said, "What do you here? this is no place for you;" then commanding them, in the name of God, to return to hell, they instantly disappeared. Many people witnessed this.

A still more remarkable instance of his power over these spirits, occurred one evening as he was returning late from Melfi, and lost his way in the forest of Ofante. The night was far advanced, a heavy rain began to fall, accompanied by a thick mist. In this critical position he saw a man approaching, who said to him, in a voice choking with rage, "The hour is come for me to make a football of thee." "Abominable monster," replied Gerard, who knew the devil but feared him not, "I command thee, in the name of the most Holy Trinity, to take the bridle of my mule, and lead me safely to Lacedogna without hurting me. The demon bowed his head, and murmuring while he took the bridle, he led him safe to the place. This incident was detailed by Don Constantine Cappuci, a gentleman of Lacedogna in the following terms: "It was about ten o'clock at night, that hearing a knocking at my door, I inquired who was there, and to my surprise recognised the voice of brother Gerard. He was dripping wet, and I said to him, "What an hour, and what weather is this for you to be out in!" "My dear Don Constantine," he replied, "God's will be done—I come from Melfi, but the night, the rain, and the fog having surprised me, I lost my way among the precipices on the banks of the Ofante; so that if God had not helped me, I should have lost my life also. On the very edge of a precipice, a man met me, whom I immediately recognised to be a devil. 'Now I will have thee,' said he, 'now I am thy master; hope nothing, for thou art not acting in obedience to thy superiors, and God will not pardon it.' At first I was surprised, but recommending myself to Jesus Christ, I at once saw who he was. 'Abominable monster,' said I to him, 'I command thee, in the name of the most Holy Trinity, to take the bridle of my mule and conduct me straight to Lacedogna without hurting me.' And so I have escaped from danger accompanied by the demon; otherwise I should have lost my life this night, or at least remained in the wilds of the Ofante. The enemy of God led me as far as the church of the Holy Trinity, and then saying, 'There is Lacedogna,' disappeared."

It was impossible for so many gifts and graces to remain hidden. He soon became known to the priests and gentlemen who frequented the house, and was consequently often sent for to go to distant places; and however unwilling his superiors were to permit this, they could not always refuse.

On one occasion he was invited to Corato, and even before he entered the town, proofs were not wanting of God's favour towards him. A poor countryman met him at a short distance from the town, and complained that his field was infested by mice, which eat the seed as soon as he sowed any. Thinking that Gerard was a priest, he besought him to curse them. Having compassion on the poor man, he made the sign of the cross on the field, and instantly it was covered with mice, dead or dying. The astonished peasant ran after him into the town, and published everywhere what had happened.

The whole place was in motion: the principal inhabitants hastened to visit him, and Gerard satisfied all. They were confounded to see a simple uneducated lay brother speak of mysteries in a manner the most sublime, and resolve the most difficult theological questions. The house in which he lodged was never empty. To some he represented the inveterate wounds of their soul; to others, the duties of their state which they were neglecting. He was humble and affable towards all. He eat little, and slept on the bare ground.

Talking with a gentleman one day, he happened to fix his eyes on a crucifix, and was immediately ravished in ecstasy.

On Good Friday, being in the church of the Benedictine nuns, when the procession of Jesus suffering entered, he fell into an ecstasy, and was seen elevated several palms from the ground. The abbess requested him to ask of God that she might be delivered from the heavy burden of her state. "It will be taken from you," he answered, "but a heavier cross will be sent in its place." And it happened accordingly: her resignation was accepted, but soon after she was attacked with cancer in the leg, from which she suffered several years, and at length died.

On this occasion, Gerand gave another proof of his sublime obedience. One evening he suddenly resolved to depart, and no persuasions could make him change his resolution. "They call me," he said, "and I must depart." In fact, the the rector, Father Fiocchi, afterwards told that that same evening he had mentally commanded him to return to the house.

The renown of his miracles made him be sent for to Castelgrande, where some years before the notary, Martin Carusi, had in a quarrel killed the son of Don Mark Carusi. Relations and friends had in vain tried to persuade the parents to pardon the culprit, and at length they resolved to send for Gerard, in the hope that he would succeed. As he journeyed towards Castelgrande the devil beset him, threatening and insulting him, and trying if possible to prevent him proceeding; but Gerard only smiled and said, "By means of holy obedience, I will do all that God commands me; for thee, vile worm of hell, begone, and shut thyself up in the abyss." Arriving at Castelgrande in the evening, he went to the house of Don Guitan Frederici, when a person named Sebastiana brought her daughter who had long been possessed. On reaching the door, the girl cried with a loud voice, "The beast is vanquished." But Gerard, full of confidence, recommended himself to God, and the possessed fell extended on the floor. He afterwards recited the litanies of the Blessed Virgin, then placing his girdle round the girl, the demon instantly left her with great noise and murmuring.

Next day, they sent for the father of the young man who had been killed, and scarcely had Gerard spoken to him, when he was willing to do all they wished. On his return home, however, his wife filled with indignation, took the bloody garments of her son, and throwing them in his face, exclaimed, "Look on these bloody garments, and then, if thou darest, go and be reconciled with the murderer of thy son." This was enough to excite again in the father's heart all his former grief and hatred; but as soon as Gerard was told what had happened, he run to the house burning with zeal, and spoke so powerfully to the parents of the deceased, that their hearts were melted, and he soon had the happiness of seeing the two families reunited in the bonds of the strictest friendship.

One day, while praying before the Blessed Sacrament, a great noise was heard; it proceeded from a possessed who was uttering the most horried blasphemies against Jesus Christ. He ran towards the girl and commanded the evil

spirit to be silent and come out of her. The demon obeyed, and the girl was perfectly restored. While at this place, he performed many other miracles, not the least of which was reforming fifteen debauched young men, who afterwards became models of piety.

When about to depart, more than three hundred persons accompanied him some distance, overwhelming him with thanks and blessings. He had effected a complete change of manners among many of the inhabitants—wherever he went the whole country was moved.

THE DAILY PRAYERS.

DEAR in their hallowed calmness are those hours,
Our daily refuge from low thoughts and cares;
When, soft as on parched earth drop summer show'rs
Fall on the soul the church's soothing pray'rs

Light Pleasure, lordly Pomp, ride prancing by,
With their gay banners to the breeze unfurl'd,
Eying askaunt, in bitter mockery,
The church oasis 'mid the desert world.

Ride on, bright train! Ye cannot mar the peace
Which the world gives not, nor may take away;
The deep pure rills, whose flowings never cease,
Strengthening our Mother for her trial-day.

Ye may not taste! And those sweet tones of love,
Dear to the weeping mourner's inmost heart,
Christ's gracious absolution, sealed above,
What for their preciousness care he? The smart,

The agonizing smart of deep-felt sin,
That fearful load the Lord alone may bear,
Hath never thrilled *your* scoffing hearts within;
No contrite sighings unto God are *there*.

But you—ye few and faithful ones! kneel on:
Heed not the mocking world; but still implore
Her scorned Redeemer o'er her heart of stone
His baptism of saving grace to pour.

Kneel on! For daily, in the holy aisle,
The little band of worshippers shall greet
Some brother, turning from the world's false smile,
The Lord, in his own sanctuary, to meet.

Kneel on—yet not in heartless worship kneel,
The formal off'ring of the Pharisee;
Nor faint, sad heart, though conscience' sting thou feel;
Kneel humbly still—thy Saviour pleads for thee!

ON SEEING THE ANCIENT FONT IN ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

WHEN urged by Charity's divine command,
The Roman Pontiff journey'd to our land;
When Pagan hordes embrac'd the yoke of love,
Mingling Hosannas with the hosts above,
Melodious concerts filled the heavens and earth—
(Exalting theme!) the sinner's second birth:
Image of God restored, his spirit free,
Jesus his God, and heaven his destiny.
"Glory to God!" the ransom'd Christians cried,
And "*Peace to man*," the Seraphim replied.
Then was the Cross in liquid beauty trac'd,
And sin's foul stains by grace divine effac'd,
This sacred *Font* the healing waters bore,
Imbued with health and life for evermore.

M. E. T. W.

THE VENERABLE PAUL OF THE CROSS

THE Venerable Paul of the Cross was founder of that most edifying and useful Order of Apostolical Hermits, who, from their devotion to the Passion of our Divine Saviour, are called *Passionists*. As this most holy man, and *Saint among the Saints*, as I may call him, was in affection and devotion at least particularly connected with our country, I will here set down what one of his first disciples, now a Bishop in Italy, and a living mirror of sanctity, has published in this respect concerning him: *Vita del. Ven. Paolo de la Croce.* p. 206.—"It cannot be said how many tears he shed, how many ardent sighs he sent up to heaven, and how fervently and constantly he prayed for the conversion of heretics, and particularly that England might return to the bosom of the Catholic Church. Very frequently he was heard to declare that England sat close to his heart. 'O England! England!' he would cry out on other occasions, with the most lively emotions. At other times he has said to his religious, 'Let us pray for England; I, for my part, cannot help doing so, even though I wished not to do it; for no sooner do I begin my prayer than this poor kingdom rushes into my mind. And there are now more than fifty years that I have constantly prayed for the conversion of England. This in particular I do every morning when I offer up the Holy Mass.—What God will do with that kingdom I do not know: perhaps he will show mercy to it, and conduct it, in his infinite mercy, to the true faith. At all events, let us pray for it, and leave God to do the rest.' Meditating on a particular occasion, on the loss of that kingdom, heretofore so fruitful in Saints, he was seen to be quite absorbed and insensible. He was then in the infirmary, and about to take a medicine which he held in his hand, stirring it about again and again without knowing what he did; at length he exclaimed, with ecstatic fervour, *O where am I now?—My spirit is in England, that land of martyrs, and praying to God for that kingdom.*'"

PROOF OF DESIGN IN THE ORIGIN OF IRON AND COAL.

THE important uses of coal and iron in adminstering to the supply of our daily wants, give to every individual amongst us, in almost every moment of our lives, a personal concern, of which but few are conscious, in the geological events of very distant eras. We are all brought into immediate connection with the vegetation that clothed the ancient earth before one-half of its actual surface had yet been formed. The trees of the primeval forests have not, like modern trees, undergone decay, yielding back their elements to the soil and atmosphere by which they had been nourished; but, treasured up in subterranean storehouses, have been transformed into enduring beds of coal, which in these later ages have become to man the sources of heat, and light, and wealth. My fire now burns with fuel, and my lamp is shining with the light of gas, derived from coal that has been buried for countless ages in the deep and dark recesses of the earth. We prepare our food, and maintain our forges and furnaces, and the power of our steam-engines, with remains of plants of ancient forms and extinct species, which were swept from the earth ere the formation of the transition strata was completed. Our instruments of cutlery, the tools of our mechanics, and the countless machines which we construct by the infinitely varied application of iron, are derived from ore for the most part coeval with, are more ancient than the fuel by the aid of which we reduce it to its metallic state, and apply it to innumerable uses in the economy of human life. Thus, from the wreck of forests that waved upon the surface of the primeval lands and from ferruginous mud that was lodged at the bottom of the primeval water, we derive our chief supplies of coal and iron—those two fundamental elements of art and industry, which contribute more than any other mineral production of the earth, to increase the riches, and multiply the comforts and ameliorate the condition of mankind.—*Dr. Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise.*

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